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ABSTRACT

The Geographical imagination of Jiangnan as Lotus-picking Girl during the Six Dynasties

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The name of Jiangnan represents not only a geographical region, but a poetic imagination of beauty, gentleness, even love and sexual allure. In many cases, images of Jiangnan always embody a feminine temperament. Even today, Jiangnan girl is such a prominent figure that Jiangnan man as a “category” is more or less shadowed in similar feminine disposition. Taking a genealogical research, this essay indicates that the geographical imagination of Jiangnan has experienced significant changes, transforming from bird-like man to southern barbarian, and finally after the Eastern Jin Dynasty, the Jiangnan image was centralized on the lotus-picking girl. What were the socio-cultural contexts behind these changes? Specifically during the Six Dynasties, how did this feminine temperament of Jiangnan first come into being? Why did the lotus-picking girl become a suitable carrier to objectify it?